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SOURCE Nowe Drogi, No 3, 1949.PRODUCTIVE COOPERATIVES

Znatol Brzoza

The last plenary session of the Central Committee devoted much attention to the problems of productive cooperatives and the evaluation of the early experiments in the organization of productive cooperatives. By the middle of May 1949, there were over 60 productive cooperatives registered at the Central Agricultural Office of Peasants Self-Aid Cooperatives, of which the greater number were Type 2 in form. At the same time, in over a hundred villages in the entire country, the peasants elected Promoters' Committees (Zalozycielskie Komitety) to make preparations for the election of administrative offices for the cooperative, so that, after harvest, a transition could be made to a joint form of management. The number of villages in favor of Type 1 is, at the moment, insignificant.

The promoters' meetings were conducted by representatives of the PZPR, SL, and PSL parties.

In accordance with the announcement made by Minister Hilary Minc at the August Plenum of the KC PPR, the Polish statutes provide for three basic forms of productive cooperatives as follows: (1) Association for Land Cultivation (Zrzeszenie Uprawy Ziemi), (2) Agricultural Products Cooperative (Rolnicza Spoldzielnia Wytworcza), (3) Agricultural Cooperative Pool (Rolniczy Zespól Spoldzielczy).

The names of the cooperatives have been changed, but the basic forms have remained the same. All three forms of cooperatives have the following common features:

1. A required minimum of work to be contributed by each member.
2. Hired help is prohibited, except in jobs requiring special skill or in case of disaster.

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3. Members retain title to land contributed to the cooperative. The cooperative does not buy land either from its members, persons outside of the cooperative, or the state.

4. Membership is voluntary.

5. All officers are elected by the members and from among members. The general assembly constitutes the highest authority.

6. All productive cooperative are members of the Central Agricultural Office of Peasant Self-Aid Cooperatives and members of the Powiat Union of Peasant Self-Aid Cooperatives.

7. Dealings with the state are based on normal trade principles.

The first type (actually several related types) is the Association for Land Cultivation. In this association, the member retains all means of production for his own use except during certain periods of the year (especially draught animals, machines, and arable land). There are three variations; (1) joint activity may be confined to plowing alone; (2) members may contribute their arable land, stock, and proportionate quantity of seed for joint cultivation; (3) plowing, planting, and harvesting may be carried out jointly.

Division of the harvest may be carried out as follows: each family gathers the harvest from the section assigned to it; harvesting is done jointly, and afterwards the products are divided in proportion to the amount of land contributed by each member.

The second and third types of cooperatives, the Agricultural Products Cooperatives and the Agricultural Cooperative Pool are not dealt with separately because their means of production are the same in character. The difference between the two types is in the method of dividing the harvest. These two types of cooperatives differ from the association type, where the arable land, all means of production, and labor are united only for a certain length of time, and all the land (except gardens from 0.3 to 1 hectare), draught animals, and other basic means of production (machinery, farm buildings, etc.) are permanently united and are permanently used by the cooperative. All this equipment, etc., remains in the cooperative and can be claimed only when a member leaves the cooperative. In that case, land equal in value to that brought into the cooperative is assigned on the outer fringe of the cooperative. Livestock may be repaid in kind or its equivalent in quintals of rye.

Every member must contribute a minimum of 100 days per year. The "day" is calculated on the basis of the average amount of farm work that can be done during the day; for example, in plowing, one day's work means the work done by a farmer using two horses to plow 0.45 hectares of land at a depth of 16 - 20 centimeters.

A common feature in all three types of productive cooperatives, which is not found in other cooperatives, is the selection of a chairman by the General Meeting and not by the administration.

Unlike the association (zrzeszenie), the Products Cooperative uses 20 percent of its income and the Agricultural Cooperative Pool uses 30 percent of its income for the creation of own investment and social fund. The balance of the income is divided among members as follows:

Type 2 -- Sixty to 70 percent of the income to be distributed is divided in proportion to work contributed, 20 - 25 percent in proportion to amount of land contributed, and 10 - 15 percent in proportion to livestock contributed.

Type 3 -- All income to be distributed is divided on the basis of work contributed.

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